



# Boston VA Research Institute, Inc.

**Date:** 5/24/2012

Finance and Accounting Management

**POLICY NO. 12-08**

## **TITLE OF POLICY:**

TRAVEL POLICY

### **1.0 PURPOSE**

To establish proper use of BVARI funds in support of travel.

### **2.0 SCOPE**

This policy applies to any traveler requesting funds from BVARI.

### **3.0 POLICY**

#### **Travel**

BVARI Funds may only be used for travel:

- Directly related to any VA , approved research activity; and
- Related to BVARI business, e.g. travel to further the acquisition of resources, education and training of BVARI faculty and staff .

BVARI funds may be used for travel to attend conferences and seminars. Such travel must be limited to a purpose related to the BVARI's mission and/or directly related to BVARI research or education activities BVARI may support domestic or foreign travel expenses of for bona fide research related scientific meetings or for other research and/or approved educational purposes consistent with the purposes of the donation.

BVARI funded travel for VA salaried employees or VA WOC employees may be at the BVARI's travel rates. It is not necessary to travel at government per diem rates and rules, unless traveling on federal funds. However, any traveling on federal grant funds are restricted to the same per diem limits as government employees.

**Restrictions for BVARI Travel**

While on travel, supported travelers may pay a "reasonable" amount for hotel accommodations as determined by the city and meeting site involved. The government per diem rate is considered reasonable; yet, if unavailable, permission may be extended to use conference hotels or an alternative rate. Maximum transportation reimbursement should be limited to the equivalent direct coach airfare, plus reasonable local ground transportation costs. First class airline fare is not considered acceptable unless a justification is approved in advance. Travelers may either contact BVARI for tickets or purchase their own and then be reimbursed. If this should cause a financial hardship, the CEO may approve advance travel requests. Advances must be requested by memorandum at least 30 days in advance of travel dates. All individual traveler's meal expenses should not exceed federal per diem rates with the exception of meals provided.

**Foreign Travel**

Foreign travel usually requires advance approval by the sponsor. Most sponsors have restrictions concerning mode of travel, reimbursable rates, purposes of travel, etc. Therefore, when foreign travel is contemplated, BVARI's office must be consulted well in advance to ensure that necessary approvals, advances and reservations are made in a timely manner. When sponsors allow foreign travel but do not provide a schedule of allowances, the foreign per diem rates established by the U.S. Department of State and Defense must be used. If reimbursement is not in U.S. dollars, current currency conversion rates will apply. If the individual is travelling abroad in their official capacity, including for a research or educational grant being performed at the VABHS and their foreign travel is being reimbursed from said grant, then the individual must obtain an Official Government Passport, which is burgundy in color. Pursuant to VHA Handbook 1400.06, Foreign travel under either a federal Official Travel Authority or under a federal Approved Authorized Absence is considered to be travel in an official duty status. ).

**Airfare under the Fly America Act**

Under the Fly America Act, the use of federal funds for travel requires that airport carriers must use the United State flag carrying airlines. Any air transportation to, from, between or within a country other than the United States, being paid for with federal funds, requires a cost sharing arrangement with a U.S. flag air carrier if service provided by such carrier is available if a foreign air carrier must be used. The exceptions to the Fly America Act are

following:: if the use of a U.S. air carrier would extend your travel time by at least six hours or more; increase the number of aircraft change made outside the U.S. by two or more; and the use of a U.S. air carrier would require a connecting time by four hours or more at an overseas interchange point.

#### **Private Auto Use**

Use of private automobiles must be approved in advance by the Director of Finance, or CEO, except when mileage is less than fifty miles, each way from the intended destination.

Reimbursement will be made at the prevailing federal mileage reimbursement rate plus applicable tolls, but in no case exceed coach airplane fare to destination. In certain cities use of a rental car may be authorized, but only if approved in advance by the Director of Finance, or CEO and/or Executive Director.

#### **Consultants / Scientific Accoutrements**

Fees to consultants, including travel and per diem costs may be paid, if supported by the study budget. A short, written justification including the benefits of the visit, qualifications of the consultant, and estimated expenses must be submitted to the CEO r for approval prior to a commitment being made.

Scientific accoutrements purchased during travel, such as scientific books, society memberships, etc. may be purchased for investigators and included in the Institute travel report. All dues and subscriptions must list the address of the VA Boston Healthcare System and will be paid for in annual increments.

## **4.0 DEFINITIONS**

### **5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES**

5.1 BVARI Board of Directors: The BVARI Board of Directors is responsible for the overall policy, planning, and coordination of all BVARI activities within the VA Boston Healthcare System.

5.2 CEO: The BVARI CEO is responsible for developing, administering, and coordinating a business process that provides optimal internal controls for BVARI.

5.3 DIRECTOR OF FINANCE: BVARI's Department Director is responsible for ensuring that the BVARI employees follow the policies defined in the policy.

5.4 VA Employees: Complete VA procedures for approving travel.

## 6.0 PROCEDURES

### Travel Request

The BVARI Travel Authorization Request must be completed by all travelers. No travel requests will be considered unless they are submitted according to the following guidelines:

1. Complete the BVARI Travel Authorization Request making sure to provide all the information requested.

If the traveler is:

- Attending a meeting/course, he/she should attach a copy of the meeting/course program materials.
- Presenting at the meeting/course, he/she should attach a copy of the abstract or invitation letter.
- Not receiving VA travel orders, he/she should complete form OPM Form 71 (Formerly SF71) – Request for Leave or Authorized Absence, have it initialed by his/her Service Chief, and attach it to the BVARI Travel Authorization Request.
- Receiving VA travel orders, he/she should attach a copy of the approved Request for Temporary Duty Travel Authority (VA Form 10-1017) or official travel orders.

It should be noted that either OPM Form 71 or a copy of the travel orders is required – not both.

2. Upon approval, all attachments should be sent to the Director of Finance of BVARI, at least 10 business days prior to the anticipated travel.

### Travel Arrangements

BVARI has contracted Garber Travel (<http://www.garber.fcm.travel/>) to arrange travel. After a traveler has received appropriate pre-authorization for travel, the traveler may contact Garber travel to plan the appropriate itinerary. Once the traveler makes arrangements with Garber, prices are set for 24 hours, during which Garber will contact BVARI to approve payment for the itinerary. The BVARI Financial Administrator requires an executed Travel Authorization Request form approval from the PI to approve payment of the travel. Garber will then send a confirmation to both the traveler and the BVARI Financial Administrator.

### Emergency Travel Arrangements

Emergency itinerary changes must be made on personal credit cards. If they are deemed later to be appropriate, they may be approved for reimbursement. All travelers are encouraged to obtain authorization prior to their travel. Emergency travel arrangements may be made outside of regular hours (9AM-5PM Eastern time) through Garber Travel's emergency travel line.

### Travel Reimbursement Form

The BVARI Travel Reimbursement Form must be completed by VA employees (whose travel expenses are supported by the Institute) WOC-appointed employees (which includes BVARI employees), and any others requesting BVARI support for travel.

Within 30 days of completion of the approved travel, a BVARI Travel Reimbursement Form should be submitted with all original receipts attached. Submit the completed BVARI Travel Reimbursement Form and required receipts to the BVARI Financial Administrator.

#### **VA Employees**

The following forms **must** be fully executed and submitted to the Director of Finance, upon approval by ACOS for Research Service:

A copy of OPM Form 71 (formerly SF71) **or** VA travel orders (10-1017) **and**,

A copy of VA Acceptance of Gifts and Donations Form (VA 10-0101B)

VA employees traveling on off duty status are considered Institute employees. This requires completion of OPM Form 71.

In addition, the last section of the VA Acceptance of Gifts and Donations form will be completed listing the amount of reimbursement and date paid and a copy will be sent to the *Chief of Staff's Office* for reporting purposes.

#### **Requests for Exceptions**

BVARI may grant exceptions to this policy only when permissible under existing laws, rules, and regulations. However, in the interest of achieving maximum uniformity, exceptions will be granted only in highly unusual circumstances, and requires the approval of the CEO and/or the BVARI Executive Committee.

### **7.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS:**

- A) BVARI Travel Reimbursement Form
- B) BVARI Travel Authorization Request
- C) OPM Form 71 (formerly SF71)
- D) VA travel orders (10-1017)
- E) VA Acceptance of Gifts and Donations Form (VA 0893)

### **8.0 REVISION HISTORY**

Revision Letter	Author	Revision Date	Description of Changes
A		01/29/2009	Original document
B	Jeffrey Burd	4/27/2012	Updated to reflect Canadian travel, Fly America act, some language clarification

**REASON FOR ISSUE:**

**SUMMARY OF CHANGES:**

3.0 Policy

Added information to make our policy compliant with Fly America Act.

**RELATED DOCUMENTS:**

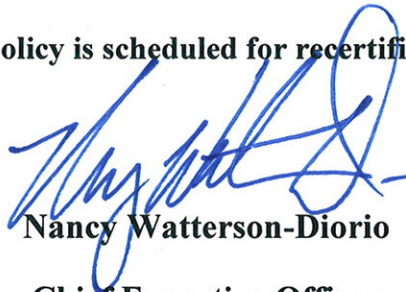
- A) BVARI Travel Reimbursement Form
- B) BVARI Travel Authorization Request
- C) OPM Form 71 (formerly SF71)
- D) VA travel orders (10-1017)
- E) VA Acceptance of Gifts and Donations Form (VA 0893)

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:**

Director of Finance

**RECISSION:**

**RECERTIFICATION:** This policy is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of May, 2015.



**Nancy Watterson-Diorio**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

DISTRIBUTION

Board of Directors, Date:

FLD: Sharepoint Server \_\_\_\_\_ E-mailed \_\_\_\_\_ to:

BVARI Staff, Stakeholders